TRANSCRIPT

All copyright and right of copyright in this transcript and in the broadcast are owned by CBS. This transcript may not be copied or reproduced or used in any way (other than for purposes of reference, discussion and review) without the written permission of Columbia Broadcasting System, Inc.

CBS NEWS SPECIAL

WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY

"Cuba: Ten Years of Castro"

as broadcast over the

CBS TELEVISION NETWORK

Tuesday, November 19, 1968

10:00 - 10:30 PM, EST

With CBS NEWS Correspondents Bert Quint and Charles Kuralt

PRODUCED BY CBS NEWS

PRODUCER: Irv Drasnin

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: Perry Wolff

CHARLES KURALT: A Latin tune is playing on the radio and the daiquiris are freshly made. You may note here a superficial resemblance to certain airline commercials luring you to islands in the sun. But this island you may never see in your lifetime.

RADIO: Esta es Radio Habana Cuba

KURALT: This is Radio Havana, Cuba.

This has been Fidel Castro's island for ten years now. His old comrade, Che Guevara, is a martyr and a legend. Uncle Sam is an enemy - unto the death. The rumba on the radio has become a march, and the symbol of the nation, a gun. The billboards speak of a hundred years of battle. But what are they fighting for? What do they wish to win? And who are they, these neighbors, these strangers, who throng the plazas and rally to the slogans, and chant the name - Fidel!

This is a report from inside Cuba on the state of the Cuban Revolution after 10 years of Fidel Castro.

(ANNOUNCEMENT)

KURALT: Good evening. I'm Charles Kuralt, CBS NEWS. What follows is a glimpse of a country turned upside down by one of the most thoroughgoing social experiments in history, the Cuban Revolution. It is a rare glimpse, which we are able to share with you because of a couple of lucky breaks. First, we obtained some recent footage filmed in Cuba by a French cameraman. Then, our own Latin American Correspondent, Bert Quint, went to Cuba with a CBS NEWS camera crew. His trip was full of difficulty. For three years, the Cubans would not permit him to enter, and then, for several days last week, they would not permit him to leave. Now, having both entered and departed with his film, Bert Quint offers, in the next half-hour, some observations and some judgments on the hothouse of change that is Cuba on the eve of the Revolution's 10th anniversary.

QUINT: Fidel. That name still echoes through the cities and towns and across the countryside of Cuba. Nearly ten years it has been since he led his guerrilla army out of the mountains and into Havana. Ten years of experimentation, of hardship, of violent and drastic change, of large failures and equally large triumphs.

And today, just as it was them, it is Fidel Castro's revolution. A Communist revolution, cast in his own image with his own tremendous force and energy. Now, as he was then, he is in firm command of this revolution. Cuba is Fidel Castro's vision of the New World.

Constantly roaming the countryside, he watches over this new world of his, maintaining an incessant, compulsive dialogue with those who inhabit it, often talking to them as to children, occasionally listening. Forty-one and paunchier now, he still is more than the leader of the Cuban Revolution - he is the Cuban Revolution. And he considers himself father, confessor, conscience and judge of his people. They call him, El Caballo - The Horse, an affectionate

reference to his strength and the force of his personality. His enemies have other names for him.

Ten years after the revolution, Cuba still carries a gun on its hip. The enemy, says Castro, already is on our soil, at the American Naval base of Guantanamo. Through high-powered telescopes and cameras, the Cubans stare at the Americans the way we peek over the border into East Berlin or Communist China. They see a base leased in 1903 for 99 years for the sum of $4,000 a year - money that Castro long has refused to accept. He resents the base, and the treaty that granted it, but does not dare to try to break that treaty by force. Watching the American warships off his coast, Castro's troops prepare for a battle he believes is bound to come. The United States watches too, from a spy ship cruising within sight of Havana.

There are other ships to be seen from the Havana breakwater. Many fly the flags of the socialist nations upon which Cuba now depends for trade and economic support. Though the Soviet Union provides more than a million dollars a day in aid, it cannot control Fidel, and the Cubans resent what they consider stinginess on the part of their allies. The Soviets have equipped Castro's army and his militia.

Cuba's women, whom you used to see wearing tight skirts in Havana, now have joined the men in donning the olive green fatigues of that militia. Stenographers, students, manicurists, elevator operators, marching to the cadence of the Communist revolution. Cuba used to be cultural fief of Spain and the United States. It was so poor that patriotism was a luxury Cubans couldn't afford. Militarism, at the least, makes people patriotic. Adults and children alike now know they belong to a country called Cuba.

Life in Cuba is based on the assumption that an American invasion fleet will come, and that Cuba may have to do battle - alone. Alone because Castro thinks the Soviet Union let him down during the 1962 missile crisis, that today it is letting down the Communists of Vietnam, and that tomorrow, it could let down the Communists of Cuba. He also believes that the election of Richard Nixon increases the American threat.

For Fidel, there is another, more immediate war, the guerrilla war throughout Latin America. The women, who have learned to use submachine guns as well as they use sewing machines, take as their inspiration the call to create one - two - three Vietnams. All are made to participate. All learn the art of war in the hours that once would have been for leisure. It is a measure of the transformation of Cuban life that a class in the use of small arms against an expected invader takes place on the roof of a hotel that used to be called the Havana Hilton.

Many Cubans, of course, do not approve of the Castro decade. A half-million of them have abandoned their country. Thousands of others are in political prisons. Cuba rarely permits its jails to be filmed. A French camerman was allowed to record the process of what Castro calls the rehabilitation of prisoners. It is really re-education.

Sample math problem: If four people in the semi-colonial countries of Latin America die every minute of hunger or curable disease, how many die of such exploitation every three minutes? The approved answer: Four times three are twelve persons who would not die under a just social system.

Castro used to execute his enemies. Now he offers them rehabilitation, and eventually freedom,. if they recant.

Women, as well as men, fear that if they do not show sufficient enthusiasm for the revolution, they will end up on a granja, a work farm. These women are here because they committed such offenses as failing to report a counterrevolutionary or trying to escape in a small boat to Miami. Prostitutes also are sent to granja, as were a group of hippies picked up recently in Havana.

For prisoners who refuse to be rehabilitated, there is a special place, the ancient fortress where the Spanish once kept their prisoners, La Cabana, overlooking Havana Harbor. Here are the men who will not recant. This prisoner said he fought beside Fidel Castro in the mountains. But when the revolution turned Communist, he turned against the revolution. For ten years he has maintained his convictions. In his words, he expects to leave in a pine box. But Castro does not want these voices to be heard. The sound portion of this film was confiscated. And so this man, who thought he was speaking to the world, turns out not to have been speaking at all.

(ANNOUNCEMENT)

QUINT: They're still serving daiquiris at La Floridita, The Little Florida bar in old Havana, just as they did when they invented the drink here. No matter what, you can't take the joy of living out of the Cubans. People still talk, and flirt, they still reminisce about the days when Papa Hemingway used to begin his day here with a glass of grapefruit juice, and read his mail and then start on extra dry daiquiris in extra large goblets. Some of La Floridita's old-timers are still here.

There just isn't any room in the new Cuba for old Havana. It's a different city now - somber, depressing. The corruption is gone from it, but gone too is the excitement and the joy. These quiet avenues once were noisy, filled with men and women rushing off, sometimes intent on business, often bent on pleasure. The sidewalk cafes have become scarce. Even under a Communist regime, though, some old Cuban traditions remain.

Most of the able-bodied of Havana have left the city for work in the countryside or to join the army. Left behind are students, government workers, the old and the retired. There's hardly an automobile, and it's a struggle to find room on a bus. These cars, mostly American models of the 1950's are the last stand of private enterprise. Everybody works for the state, now - except the taxi drivers. They're the only people left allowed to accept tips.

Most everyone in Cuba today has a job and makes a living wage. The problem is finding something to spend it on. To buy anything you wait in long lines. The ladies of Havana still are style-conscious, but their shoes are worn. Propaganda displays may be good for patriotism, but they won't replace a torn stocking. Three years ago, when I last visited Cuba, the shortages already were severe. Now, they're worse. You need a ration book for just about everything, and there hasn't been a book issued in more than a year. Even if you do have coupons left, the chances are that the stores are as empty as their windows.

Where Cuba is hardest hit is in the stomach. The main topic of conversation is food, and how little there is. Cuba exports much of what it grows, to keep machinery and weapons coming into the country.

The women line up with their ration books to read a blackboard telling what is available each day. The only item I saw in plentiful supply in this supermarket was canned milk from the Soviet Union. Children and old people are entitled to a quart a day, but everybody else gets only three cans a month. On most of the shelves, there was nothing at all. "Carne hoy" - meat today - the sign says. And that makes it an occasion. Meat is particularly scarce; it is needed for export. The ration book says you can have three quarters of a pound a week - if you can find it. During my two weeks in Cuba, I saw beef served twice, once to children in a rural school, once in one of Havana's best restaurants, in the form of hamburger. No one starves in Cuba today, but no one eats well, either. And the shortages, always cause for grumbling, are becoming cause for another kind of concern.

This is a committee for the defense of the revolution. These committees exist on every block. Their members have the job of spying on their neighbors. Here they are being told to guard against thefts caused by shortages of food and clothing. It's through these committees, even more than the army, that Castro controls Cuba. One message is always the same: Defend the revolution. There will be a better tomorrow.

Fidel Castro has made his decision. If there is to be a better tomorrow, it must be made by the guajiros, the people of the land. To understand the kind of tomorrow Fidel Castro is trying to build, you must leave Havana on the auto route and drive into the countryside. That is where he won the revolution; that is where he hopes to make it succeed.

Rural Cuba, like most of rural Latin America, has been a place of thatched roofs and the vacant stare of poverty. For most of these people before the revolution there was only near starvation, uncertain work and a meager income, an income earned with the few animals and tools they could come by. For three centuries it has been this way. In ten years Fidel Castro has done much to change it.

Sunday afternoons in the province of Las Villas used to be a time of leisure. Sundays are now working days. For some, there is an almost pioneer spirit in the task of building the new Cuba. But it

is hard to say whether they are all here by choice or by circumstance. These are workers from the city, spending part of their allotted time, usually about two months a year, working the land. In a direct way the American trade boycott has sent these people into the countryside. Our trade restrictions have forced the Cubans towards self-sufficiency. They have started to grow the foods that they used to import from the countries around them. Thus, in a strange manner, the Americans have taught the Cubans to come closer together and to rely on themselves.

I talked to a ten-year-old. "What's your name?" I asked. "Jose Manuel," he said. "Why are you here?" "To work for the revolution." "What revolution?" "La revolucion socialista." "The socialist revolution." So it is not only land that is being cultivated here but ideas as well.

The guajiros are still poor but today they have work and free medical care, meals on the job, education for their children. It is here, in the coffee fields and throughout the countryside, that Fidel Castro's revolution has met with its greatest acceptance and its greatest success.

Success must be measured in other ways too. Most importantly, in the size of the sugar crop. Sugar is Cuba's basic industry. Ten million tons of sugar is the goal for 1970, where Cuba never before cut more than six and a half million tons. The big refineries stand waiting.

These are sticks of dynamite in the hands of the Che Guevara Brigade. Once dynamite in these hands would have been used to blow up bridges or attack Batista barracks. Today these 4,500 highly trained and loyal agricultural workers, laboring in three shifts, 24 hours a day, use their dynamite to clear the land - for planting sugar cane. The land is also cleared for people with $35 million worth of new bulldozers paid for with the food that never reached the tables of Cuba.

Castro is building new towns. This was once the private estate of an American who used it for hunting.

While other socialist revolutions - and other underdeveloped countries - press on for industrialization in growing cities, Fidel has brought his revolution back to the land, where it started. His effort at industrialization failed. He can't afford another failure.'

If there is a privileged class in this new town, in this new Cuba, it is the children. Most of them, not just here but throughout the country, spend more time in the classrooms and dormitories of the state, than they do in the homes of their parents. And it begins in nurseries like this one, provided while their parents work. When they are old enough they learn in the schools, to read, to write, to do arithmetic, to be good Communists - and to hate the United States. Illiteracy is ending in today's Cuba; indoctrination certainly is not.

(TRANSLATING CHILDREN"S CHANTING): "It is almost our only hope of victory. We cannot avoid the call of the moment - to give, our lives, our sacrifices.

All of our action is a war cry against imperialism, against the great enemy of the human race...the United States of America.

We will be like Che - internationalists.

Like Che - guerrillas.

Like the - Communists.

Che has not died. He lives. His example lives - in Fidel."

What Fidel Castro has done and continues to do has few parallels in modern history. In ten years he has changed this country from an island of pleasure and comfort, of glamour and good living for some and of poverty for others, into a nation of mediocrity. Some of the things that revolution has brought to Cuba are good and some are bad. Where many people were hungry before and others ate very well, now all get enough but just barely enough to eat. Where there was illiteracy now everyone can read and write. Where there was movement toward the cities and toward industrialization there is a return to the land. Where there was a joyous carefree atmosphere, there is a life of austerity, of routine, of regimentation and constant hard work. Where there was gaiety and abandon there is now dullness, boredom and a good deal of dedication strengthened by hatred and fear of the United States. Where there was sometimes a happy-go-lucky liberty and sometimes a rightest dictatorship, there is now enforced order and a Communist dictatorship. In a single decade the way of life and the spirit of a nation has been altered. And as things stand in Cuba today there is little likelihood of a return to the past.

ANNOUNCER: "Cuba: Ten Years of Castro" will continue.

(ANNOUNCEMENT)

KURALT: The film Bert Quint brought back from Cuba makes it clear. Cuba's is a thorough revolution. What is going on just over the horizon from Key West is nothing less than this: an attempt to change forever in that island the nature of the state, the family, and even the individual human personality.

By hard trial and by grievous error, Fidel Castro is fashioning, in the most unlikely of settings, the most experimental of societies. The experiment is based on his readings of Marx, to be sure, but it is based more fundamentally on his hopes and notions and hunches, and on his knowledge of his people.

By his repression and by his belligerency, he has made of the countries around him, including this one, serious enemies, and he has concerned even some of his friends. But by his elimination of the most abject poverty, his strides in education and medicine .

and employment, his very stubborn survival against the odds, he has won the loyal adherence of most of his own people.

Since this is an experiment, it is not possible to say what will finally emerge from the test tube, or even to say for certain whether the experiment can proceed without blowing up the laboratory. But the Castro government shows no sign of internal collapse, and short of an invasion, there is little more the United States can do from the outside to bring Fidel Castro down.

And so, he is likely to go on, governing by vague intuition and by ringing decree, haranguing, persuading, coercing, stumbling, recovering, struggling toward a classless, moneyless society which we would say will never work, which he would say is a pattern for the certain future of the world.

With Bert Quint, this is Charles Kuralt. Good night.